

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

- 1 1. A method for determining a price of a program transmitted by a programming
2 provider to subscribers, comprising:
3 receiving, via a network connection, a purchase order for a program from a
4 subscriber belonging to a subscriber group;
5 determining a first price for the purchase order if the program has been purchased
6 by a threshold number of subscribers belonging to the subscriber group; and
7 determining a second price, higher than the first price, if the program has not been
8 purchased by the threshold number of subscribers belonging to the subscriber group.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the first and second prices comprises
2 executing a pricing program.
- 1 3. The method of claim 1, further comprising preparing and sending an invoice to the
2 subscriber for the program.
- 1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the threshold number of subscribers is greater than
2 one and is some portion of all the subscribers of the subscriber group.
- 1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the threshold number is all the subscribers of the
2 subscriber group.
- 1 6. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing, via a network communication,
2 at least one of the first price and the second price to the subscriber prior to the subscriber
3 purchasing the program.
- 1 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the purchase order indicates an intent of the
2 subscriber to view the program at a future time.
- 1 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising notifying at least one other subscriber in
2 the subscriber group of the purchase order.

1 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving, prior to receiving the purchase
2 order, an electronic message indicating an intent of the subscriber to purchase the program.

1 10. The method of claim 9, further comprising notifying, via a network communication,
2 at least one other subscriber in the subscriber group of the intent.

1 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining whether the subscriber
2 belongs to the subscriber group prior to determining the price.

1 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of determining whether the subscriber
2 belongs to the subscriber group comprises accessing a subscriber database.

1 13. The method of claim 1, further comprising processing a request to initiate a network
2 dialog session with at least one other subscriber in the subscriber group.

1 14. The method of claim 13, handling messages sent between subscribers participating
2 in the network dialog session.

1 15. A system for transmitting programs to subscribers, comprising:
2 a database containing subscriber groups each including at least two subscribers;
3 a programming provider system connected to the database and configured to:
4 receive, via a network communication, purchase orders for programs from a
5 plurality of subscribers;
6 determine a first price for each purchase order if more than a threshold number of
7 subscribers purchasing the same program belong to a common subscriber group;
8 determine a second price, less than the first price, for each purchase order if less
9 than a threshold number of subscribers purchasing the same program belong to a common
10 subscriber group.

1 16. The system of claim 15, wherein the programming provider is at least one of a cable
2 provider and a satellite provider.

1 17. The system of claim 15, wherein the programming provider is connected to the
2 plurality of subscribers by a network connection.

1 18. The system of claim 15, wherein the programs are one of a view-on-demand
2 program and a pay-per-view program.

1 19. The system of claim 15 wherein the programs are movies.

1 20. The system of claim 15 wherein the programs are entertainment events.

1 21. The system of claim 15, wherein the programs are transmitted at a predetermined
2 time.

1 22. A system, comprising:
2 a plurality of signal processing units each associated with one of a plurality of
3 subscribers, wherein the plurality of subscribers make up subscriber groups each including
4 at least two subscribers; and
5 a programming provider system connected to the signal processing units and
6 configured to:
7 transmit fee-based programming events to the signal processing units; and
8 determine prices of programming event purchased by the plurality of subscribers,
9 wherein a price for each programming event is determined according to a number of
10 purchase orders for the same programming event received from subscribers belonging to a
11 same subscriber group.

1 23. The system of claim 22, wherein programming provider system is configured to:
2 determine a first price for each purchase order if more than a threshold number of
3 subscribers purchasing the same program belong to a common subscriber group; and
4 determine a second price, less than the first price, for each purchase order if less
5 than a threshold number of subscribers purchasing the same program belong to a common
6 subscriber group.

1 24. The system of claim 22, further comprising a database accessible by the
2 programming provider system and containing a subscriber identifier for each of the plurality
3 of subscribers and a subscriber group identifier for each subscriber group.

1 25. The system of claim 22, wherein the plurality of signal processing units are
2 configured to communicate messages via a communication network.

1 26. The system of claim 22, wherein the programming provider system is at least one of
2 a cable provider and a satellite provider.

1 27. The system of claim 22, wherein the programming provider system is connected to
2 the plurality of subscribers by a network connection.

1 28. The system of claim 22, wherein the programming events are one of a view-on-
2 demand program and a pay-per-view program.

1 29. The system of claim 22, wherein the programming events are movies.

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